

LIFE WITHOUT BOXES

by Karl Boyken

Karl Boyken is a computer systems administrator for the University of Iowa. He has been attending residential programs at The Monroe Institute® for four years and is a Dolphin Energy Club member. Karl is also a hospice volunteer and a student of yoga.

Like many people who are drawn to The Monroe Institute, I've had several other-than-ordinary experiences over the years. I grew up in a small rural town in the midwestern United States, and there was nothing in that environment that helped me put those experiences into some kind of meaningful context. I hid these odd happenings, and as a result I felt other than normal, not a very good thing to be as a child in a small farming community. Long after I had left home, I continued to lock away a vital part of myself. The walls I built inside me were reflected outwardly in the distance I felt in my relationships with others.

The residential programs at The Monroe Institute have turned out to be the key that has released the magical part of me I had hidden for decades. I became interested in the Institute as a means to cultivate any remote viewing skills I might have. I was focused solely on how the programs could benefit me. What I didn't realize was that this path that appeared to lead into myself would actually take me outward, demolishing not only the walls inside but those outside as well.

When I returned from my *GATEWAY VOYAGE*®, I saw the town where I live with new eyes. Everywhere I looked, there were opportunities to nurture the part of my life I'd locked away. Shaaron Honeycutt's morning yoga sessions had left me thirsting for more. I was amazed to discover a yoga center just a block from work. I signed up for a class over my lunch hour. I'd become curious about energy healing. A bit further down the street was a massage school that offered Reiki attunements and courses in energy healing. I began registering for classes. I'd been working with dreams all of my life, but never face-to-face with others. I learned about some people who were doing dream work, and soon, we were sharing our dreams. Before long, I was part of a community of like-hearted people whom I'd never known existed.

GUIDELINES® took this a step further. As in all the programs I've been to, the tape exercises were wonderful. The most striking occurrence at *GUIDELINES*, however, involved another participant. While we were doing a paired intuitive questioning exercise, his inner self-helper (ISH) communicated very energetically with me. The energy of that encounter continued to work on me throughout the night. The program taught me that we are all guides for each other. Mirroring the community I'd discovered at home, I began to find another community among the participants in the programs. No matter how many people I know going into a program, I now make it a point to try to get to know everyone.

And that even includes the people who annoy me. I now know that my irritation is often telling me something important. I try to ask, what is it about myself that is trying to distance me from this person? The answer can be profound. At one program I realized that a couple of women

really irked me. Sitting quietly with my discomfort, it dawned on me that my lifelong distrust of aspects of the archetypal Mother was being projected onto them. With that realization a lot of new ground for personal growth opened up for me.

The trainers at each program have always emphasized taking our program experiences back into daily life. My own experiences have shown me that any distance between myself and others is related to distance between aspects of myself. Any judgment about others that cuts me away from them will also cut me away from parts of myself. By serving others, I serve myself. I've tried to bring this lesson into my daily life, into my relationships with family and friends and with people I meet at work—especially at work. I'm a computer systems administrator, and the culture of systems administration is very dehumanizing. The language says it all: people are users, or more often, clueless users. Lately, I've been consciously trying to look at the people I help as human beings and to see my job as an act of service. The steps I've taken in that direction have helped me feel better about myself and the job I do.

Last February, I took one more step to bring Monroe home. I helped a friend, Jackie Phillips, coordinate a *GATEWAY EXCURSION*® weekend with Bob and Marinda Holbrook. I was excited about sharing Monroe insights with my friends. As the program began, I was consciously struggling with a set of fears: "What if my friends don't like the program? Will they still like me?" I felt exposed and vulnerable. It was great! I realized that this was another opportunity to tear down more of the walls within myself, and outside myself. My friends all loved the program, and I took another step toward living my life without boundaries.

I frequently think back to Joshua in a Box, the video we saw at the *GATEWAY VOYAGE* about a man living inside a box. I'd been doling my life out among a set of boxes. The Monroe Institute has helped me begin to toss out those boxes, and live more openly, freely, and joyfully.

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